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Pacific Partnership Physical Therapists Assist Patients in Cambodian Physical Rehab Center

BY VJOHNSON – JUNE 26, 2014

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From Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Karolina A. Oseguera

As part of a professional exchange with their Cambodian counterparts, U.S. Navy physical therapists provided services directly to patients at a local physical rehabilitation clinic as part of Pacific Partnership 2014, June 23.

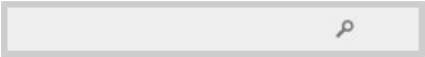


Lt. Matthew Bush examines a patient with cerebral palsy at a physical rehabilitation clinic in Phnom Penh as part of Pacific Partnership 2014. Pacific Partnership is in its ninth iteration and is the largest annual multilateral humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Asia-Pacific region. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Karolina A. Oseguera)

“Our goal here is to work with the staff and learn as much as we can from them, but also impart the knowledge that we have to them,” said Lt. Matthew Bush, a U.S. Navy physical therapist.

The clinic, called The Veterans International Cambodia, provides rehabilitation services to people with disabilities who were victims of war and who are, due to their poverty level, typically marginalized in society.

The center consists of a large workshop for the production of prostheses, orthoses, crutches and wheelchairs, and a treatment center that provides gait training for amputees and physical therapy for polio victims.



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Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Wesley Lagman interacts with a patient with cerebral palsy at a physical rehabilitation clinic in Phnom Penh as part of Pacific Partnership 2014. Pacific Partnership is in its ninth iteration and is the largest annual multilateral humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Asia-Pacific region. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Karolina A. Oseguera)

“The setup and equipment here are great,” said Bush. “They have a really nice facility. The staff is highly educated. They are all fluent in English and they document in English so it’s easier for us to follow along and get integrated.”

Bush and his counterpart, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Wesley Lagman, saw a number of patients in one day, who presented issues ranging from amputations, developmental issues, and cerebral palsy.

“I am working with a patient who has cerebral palsy,” said Lagman. “He has a lot of issues with balancing and walking. We have been doing balance and functional movement exercises. I am having a great time working with the kids.”

Bush said he believes it is the goal of Pacific Partnership to develop relationships in case of a natural disaster because once the friendships are created, providing assistance and working side-by-side will be easier in the likely austere aftermath of a disaster.



Lt. Matthew Bush assists a patient as he does walking exercises at a physical rehabilitation clinic in Phnom Penh as part of Pacific Partnership 2014. Pacific Partnership is in its ninth iteration and is the largest annual multilateral humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Asia-Pacific region. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Karolina A. Oseguera)

“I really enjoy the one-on-one interaction we get with the patients in physical therapy,” said Bush. “To be able to practice and help patients in another country is another experience entirely.”

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